The COMMONWEAL

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Palestine

THE ZIONISTS now have a nation—together with an immediate need for machine guns and anti-aircraft—and we must hope for, and suppose, the best: that Arab opposition to this new nation will not exceed the inevitable rioting and guerrilla action, and will not lead to mass conflict. We must hope, and presume, that the Palestinian state will be governed democratically by wise and calm Jewish leaders, and that this government will be able to suppress the habits of violence in the illegal and extremist bands which up till now have been uncontrollable. We must hope that the Holy Land will provide a refuge for a certain limited number of displaced persons who have nowhere else to turn. Dr. Weizmann thinks that 100,000 such persons may be admitted within two or three years—perhaps sooner.

That figure stops you at once. It is not much greater than the numbers provided for under the British quota against which so desperate a struggle has been conducted. That figure calls immediate attention to the size of the new Jewish state. It is a small state. It must remain a small state. There is so much land and not any more—even if there is peace in Palestine, even if there is peace between the Jews and the Arabs. Even if every parcel of the land is diligently cultivated and every industrial possibility exploited, even if the Jewish populations outside Palestine continue to contribute funds and experts, and do not forget the Palestinian state once it is created.

The Zionists have their state, and many of them have dreamed for many years about it, lived to see it exist, suffered and sacrificed to bring it into existence. For these noble people we have always had the greatest sympathy and we rejoice with them now.

But for Jewish people all over the world we have sympathy and respect. We do not rejoice with them now on the founding of the Palestinian state, because the founding of that state has not changed their situation. Where they have been oppressed and miserable they still are oppressed and miserable. Where they are at home, citizens of a state, they continue to be at home, safe, industrious, and contributing greatly to the culture of every state in which they live. Where they are wandering in search of a home, in search of a state in which to be at home, they still are hindered by a world paralysis which prevents all men —Jewish or not—from moving freely about in search of work, home and security.

The United Nations gave the Palestinian state to the Jews. And it is as if America gave a desert or so in Arizona to the Jews. The gift solves nothing. If the word gift offends anyone, then the rendering of justice, the completion of a promise in the specific locality of Palestine, solves nothing.

There will never be but a small fraction of the Jewish people living in Palestine, or dependent on Palestine for a secure life in freedom. Fortunately. Because the nations of the world—the world itself should we ever get rid of our rigid national entities—would be diminished were the Jewish people to be segregated, withdrawn from circulation.

We know this instinctively in America. Europe knew it once, and has forgotten. But until Jewish people can live again everywhere in Europe, unreservedly accepted, Europe will not be rebuilt. If in America we ever forget that we need the presence, the contribution, of the Jewish people, America will be destroyed. It is that way. There are the Irish, the Jews, the Portuguese and the Greeks, and no one cares whether they are called nations, or races; there are the Negroes and the Indians and the Chinese, and no one cares about the demonstrations that everyone's blood is just like everyone's blood; there are all these peoples in the world, and there is no use locking them up or shifting them about. There are even the Germans. There is no use making zones or Palestines.

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There is no use making new flags and new passports—no use putting temporary visas on the passports, or granting temporary admission to the student veterinarian. The only thing that will do any good is to open everything up. Of course that is not what we are doing now. That is not what we have been doing. But then look where we are.

Inflation Control

THE SPECIAL three-part congressional program of stop gap aid to France, Italy and Austria, European Recovery Program, and domestic price and inflation control appears to be advancing hesitantly, in that order. It also seems that the stop gap assistance generates the least argument, and domestic regulation the most. That seems logical.

The domestic program is the toughest, the closest surrounded by partisan politics, and the one most difficult to analyze and understand. Very disconcertingly, the price and scarcity of things, and the wage, interest and profit levels hit the voter most directly and tangibly, but at the same time, the causes of these very same economic things are remote, abstract, theoretic and evidently impossible to identify with material that can be measured and proved. This difficulty provides a five ring circus for politics, taken in its more opportunistic meaning.

There gradually appear to be three different general areas where inflation control is urged. The loftiest region is that of money and credit, the Treasury and the banks. At the bottom is the old OPA mainland—consumer rationing and price control of commodities which the consumer in the street directly purchases—and wage controls. There is increasing discussion of another level in between, where priority allocation and other checks could be imposed upon producers—where, for instance, it is claimed there is now a "gray market" in steel. The concept of this middle region still seems to be vague and elastic, and also the types of control that would fit into it.

Perhaps because the middle level is so vague and relatively little known by most people, it appears currently the most hopeful place to go to work. Rationing and price control at the retail shelf is ominously difficult. Black market and bootlegging, and enormous, cumbersome and expensive administrative machinery could too confidently be expected as a quick result. The OPA after the war didn't do so well. The feeling grows that attacking retail distribution and prices is too obviously attacking the last symptoms of an economic problem, symptoms far away from effective causes and multiplied beyond the possibility of genuine containment.

The effort to control inflation and deflation at the level of money and credit, in the Treasury, the Federal Reserve and in the banks, is a highly esoteric activity, with highbrow schools of thought, money witch doctors and passionate demagogs, and the traditional "interests." The effort may well be very important indeed in the strict sphere of economics, but it cannot engage the great public as long as the issues and facts and tendencies are as obscure as they are now to most of us. A program based on money and credit control could not by itself satisfy the political demand for action on inflation.

The Administration appears to be stressing "the priority, allocation, inventory control, export control, and other authority" which fit in the field of the producer and the upper middle man. These inflation checks, which may also turn out to help as deflation controls, are difficult to consider as emergency, sudden laws. It would take a fairly long time to explain and work them out effectively. The Administration emphasizes that they would not be imposed without consultation with "industry, consumer and labor groups affected." That is presumably why stop gap and enabling inflation laws are asked for now. Senator Taft's interpretation and criticism is not the most helpful. Because it is impossible to state immediately exactly what prices and allocations will have to be governed by law, it does not mean that totalitarian control of everything must be accepted in order to control *anything*. Nor that Congress must refuse to control anything in order to avoid controlling everything. It would seem more reasonable to continue the control laws now running out, and to substitute for them and add some new ones and wipe out old ones on the basis of more mature debate and more positive consultation with business and labor and academic representatives.

Christian Democrats

THE RECENT news from France and Italy must indeed strengthen the doubts of many disinterested people about Christian Democrats as a moderating or progressive political force. It may even propel some in the direction of those critics who all along have held that the two terms are incompatible. One difficulty has been to square a hierarchical religious structure with genuinely democratic sentiments in social and political matters.

To be sure, wherever such formations have taken place in Europe and in Latin America, the leaders and the bulk of the membership have been Catholics. (The exceptions are Germany, where Protestants also constitute a major element—especially in those areas where they are predominant in the general population—and Scandinavia, where the movement is completely Protestant.) Generally speaking, however, the Catholic leaders have intended to form political groups

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with a platform which would embody the socio-political aspirations of other creeds. There is no denying, for instance, that the social ideals outlined by recent Popes have much in common with current Protestant social manifestoes. And where could religion develop more unhindered than in those lands where democratic institutions protect the individual and the cult itself, where personal freedom and civic stability enable the individual citizen to develop his talents and pursue his highest aspirations in tranquillity?

Under the aegis of Christian democracy it was hoped to enroll all those who recognize that the inviolability of the human person and of the family, the democratic freedoms of worship, expression, assembly and the protections of the law—as well as the vital necessity of social security—are based ultimately upon the Creation and the Redemption. And also those who simply supported the specific social objectives which Christian principles happen to imply. Could there be a firmer base for political action? Yet the path has been obstructed with boulders.

Don Luigi Sturzo's Popular Party, which really began it all in the days immediately following the first war, met obstructions both from within the Church and from without during its short meteoric course. It was, even so, developing impressive momentum when it was sacrificed for the sake of peace with Mussolini; Don Sturzo himself was exiled. Except for small groups of his disciples the idea remained quiescent until Hitler gained control of Western Europe. The Christian Democrats were born anew as political groups in the travail of the Resistance; they also came into being in Germany after the surrender on the foundation of the old Center; they even began to make their presence felt, in a minor way, in such Latin American lands as Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Argentina itself. It seemed that at last the moment had arrived, and Don Sturzo returned to Italy in triumph. Even in distant Norway Christian Democrats were elected to office.

The Italian Christian Democrats continued their Resistance collaboration with Socialists and Communists to form a coalition government. In the ensuing months, however, the coalition weakened and finally broke up. Even as late as February of this year Socialists and Communists gave De Gasperi a vote of confidence, but by late June only the Rightist groups, in addition to his own party, supported him. Foreign commentators began to say, what many had thought all along, that the Italian Christian Democrats were actually a party of the Right. This was certainly belied at the Party convention in Naples last month, where De Gasperi himself sought to hold the center between the Left wing, who believe that economic and social reform come first (and number many adherents among the Italian workers) and the Right wing with its monarchist tinge, which maintains that the first thing to do is to stop the communists in their tracks. Today Italian Christian Democrats do in fact constitute the principal opposition to the Italian communists.

In France there has been the same uneasy coalition, born of the Resistance. But the MRP, there, recently suffered those heavy losses in municipal elections and is threatened by absorption by De Gaulle—a sharp move to the Right. However, their defeat at the polls was not as decisive as indicated by American newspapers. The largest proportion of offices (48 percent) actually went to the parties of the Center—Radicals, Socialists and MRP. Moreover, whatever communist provocations and the ambitions of De Gaulle may now produce, the MRP has continued to favor a moderating Third Force (between Communism and Gaullism). That has been the current tenor of M. Bidault's organ, *L'Aube,* and also of *La Croix,* the highly influential French Catholic daily. Here, as in Italy, the social aspirations of the Christian Democrats remain firm. But their position is most precarious.

Elsewhere Christian Democrats have not reached similar positions of responsibility. They have no political formations whatever in the English-speaking world and consequently no influential party organs. None of the leading English Catholic periodicals reflect a Christian-democratic viewpoint, while in the United States the one or two general Catholic publications which do so seldom find their views reflected in public Catholic utterances. Best informed and most intent on these matters and the source of much of the data relayed here, is the American Center (5 Beekman Street, New York 7, N. Y.) of the international Center of Information Pro Deo, whose news service unhappily seldom provides much "copy" for either secular or Catholic periodicals in this country.

Latin America presents a similar spectacle of disaffection within and Leftist and Rightist opposition in the arena. Even in Chile, where early last summer the official Catholic Youth had protested against the fact that "the great majority of our Catholics spend their strength in a sterile and prejudicial anti-communism without paying attention to the just demands of the people who continue to suffer from the worst sort of poverty . . ." the Hierarchy has just censured the Falange (Christian Democrats) so severely for voting with the Communists in criticism of government suppression of a coal strike, and for justifying their stand against the criticisms of a Bishop, that the Falange is planning to dissolve. Only four deputies are involved and the group may be able to reconstitute itself under a happier name.

All in all, if the way of the individual apolitical Christian is a hard one in this tearful vale, how much more arduous that of the harassed Christian Democrat! EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

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Mr. Taft and American Aid

J. L. Benvenisti

I FEEL impelled to say something about Mr. Taft. I will say it with the restraint and courtesy due a prominent American figure from a foreigner who is now on American soil, but I will say it nevertheless.

Mr. Taft is, I gather, rather inimical to President Truman's anti-inflation proposals. If so, that is an American affair on which I have no right to comment; but since in the course of his criticisms Mr. Taft brought in other countries besides the United States, including by implication my own, I feel I have a right to speak.

During the course of his recent radio address Mr. Taft spoke of President Truman's demand for controls as introducing the police state methods "which have brought the rest of the world as seekers for charity to our door." The obvious retort to that, even assuming that the controls as they exist in Britain, for instance, could conceivably be held to constitute the police state, is that Mr. Taft is simply confusing cause and effect. We have not got into a jam as a result of introducing these methods. We have introduced these methods because we are in a jam.

Actually this kind of confusion is discernible in a somewhat wider context among many Americans and many very liberal and generously-minded Americans at that. It is occurring not only in relation to our controls but to the whole purpose and nature of British Socialism. British Socialism is not the cause of the mess in which we find ourselves but is an instrument designed to combat the forces which were getting us into the mess. Whether it will succeed in doing so still remains to be seen. It has had no time as yet to have much effect either for good or evil. This at least applies to the nationalization schemes, which are specific measures designed to deal with a specific trend, and not introduced because of their own intrinsic loveliness.

This point is still widely missed in America and there is some excuse for this, for the British nationalization schemes have been surrounded by a certain emotional penumbra—particularly the nationalization of the mines, a measure which has been fought for for a long time with considerable partisan acrimony and has called forth a certain sense of class triumph on its introduction. But that does not invalidate what I say.

It may surprise people over here to know that the virtues of free enterprise are almost as widely recognized in Britain as in America. We recognize that given the right conditions, free enterprise is the best and speediest way of raising the standard of living. But we also recognize, indeed we cannot help recognizing, that those conditions can and in point of fact have ceased to exist—at least in Britain. When, for instance (and this was the case with the coal mines), enterprise ceases over a long period to offer to the investor sufficient prospect of reasonably secure gain for him to hand over his money, then quite obviously the bottom has been knocked out of the whole system, and you must either submit to economic annihilation or do something about it. And the only thing you could do in the case of the mines was to borrow money on the taxpayers' credit and that means nationalizing. Other nationalization schemes depend on similar *ad hoc* considerations.

To return however to Mr. Taft. Not only has Mr. Taft turned the whole relation of cause and effect upside down in this matter of European controls. His remarks lay him open to a more disturbing accusation. Either Mr. Taft has not read the report of the sixteen nations' conference on the Marshall offer or he is assuming that nobody else has read it, for it is quite impossible for anyone to talk as Mr. Taft talked to an audience that had even a nodding acquaintance with that document.

The Paris report gives a brief but very clear analysis of the origin of Europe's difficulties. So far as I am aware the correctness of that analysis has never been seriously challenged nor does the Paris analysis have anything whatever to do with police states or any other kind of bogy. The report clearly shows that, police states or no police states, European production leaped up with surprising speed after the war—despite war devastation, and was then checked by a number of circumstances of which the chief are the cessation of the prewar flow of food and materials from the East and Far East and the collapse of the Ruhr coal supplies. The need to replace these sources of supply from the West accentuated a grave dollar shortage and this was further intensified by the dissipation of Europe's overseas investments, which were largely sold to obtain the supplies and munitions of war. That in a nutshell is the story, and until Mr. Taft came along nobody seems to have impugned its accuracy.

But all this raises a more serious consideration. If the American public has so little knowledge of the facts which the report reveals that Mr.

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Taft can get away with this kind of thing, then it probably is insufficiently acquainted with the conclusion of the report. That means it has a very imperfect picture of the probable future of Europe, even if the full ERP program is realized.

In these circumstances at least one of those conclusions may here be restated, namely that the Paris report forecasts that even in 1951, after the full postulated aid has been received, Europe, due to the combined causes of a greatly increased population and a diminished food supply, will be on an appreciably lower standard of consumption than she was before the war. More serious even than this conclusion is the assumption which led the signatories to refrain from painting an even more pessimistic picture than the one they have actually given; for the signatories assume that by 1951 there will be something like the pre-war flow of food and materials from Eastern Europe. I believe that assumption to be highly dangerous. In fact I believe it to be false.

Not only does the assumption of such a flow postulate a tranquillity of political conditions between the Soviet and the West of which at the moment there seems no prospect at all, but it ignores one of the most fundamental facts of today, a fact more fundamental even than the communist ideology. It is the fact that the populations of Russia and Eastern Europe are increasing at a greater rate than our own, and that in consequence there will be a continual tendency for the exportable food, and to some extent the exportable material, supplies of Eastern Europe to become increasingly restricted.

On the most favorable assumptions, therefore, made by the report, life on the fringes of Europe will for a very long time be difficult and precarious. On the somewhat less favorable assumptions to which I have just referred, and which I fear are the ones that will ultimately be realized, life will, for generations perhaps, be unpleasant and precarious to a quite damnable degree. I do not think this is as yet sufficiently appreciated—even by Mr. Marshall. Mr. Marshall in his Harvard speech spoke of restoring the world to "normal economic health." I don't think there is a cat's chance in hell of Europe being restored to normal economic health in any circumstances whatever and the sooner America realizes this the better.

The real problem facing American statesmanship then, as I see it, is the problem of an overpopulated Europe and of how to build that into the framework of cultural, economic and ultimately military coherence with the United States. If America can do that she serves Europe as much as herself, for in this way Western civilization has at least some chance of survival. It cannot survive in any other way at all.

What are the chances of American statesmanship achieving that object—and what are the means?

If the full ERP program is carried out, and the thing is left at that, then the general picture of Europe under the most favorable assumptions will be something like this. There will be a continual ferment of dissatisfaction combined with an uneasy apprehension of a coming war. In that atmosphere two trends will be discernible. A certain number of people, perhaps a considerable number, will vaguely but desperately hope for a modus vivendi with Russia, because if that can be established they will feel that the European continent can somehow be insulated and a conflict avoided by making an American foothold impossible. It is of course a very foolish thought that such a modus vivendi can be established, but that will not prevent a number of people from entertaining it.

★

This trend will of course produce its countertrend as it has already done in France in de Gaulle's movement, a trend which might well be paralleled in other countries under the leadership of less reputable men. There is a certain type of political adventurer who will discern a career for himself in mastering the state on the anti-communist ticket and regimenting his country into a defense force for use by the United States. Whether this would be a very acceptable offering to America is debatable, but the trend can already be discerned.

In brief, the picture of the European fringe, as I see it, is even in the best of circumstances one of continuing insecurity. Neither economic nor political health will be restored and because the whole doubt-laden and despair-charged atmosphere of Europe will be so utterly alien to everything for which America stands, there will, I fear, be a conspicuous want of that sense of unity with the United States which will be the test of the success of American policy. Indeed if Europe, once the Marshall aid is exhausted, is left to her own devices, then not only will the aims of the Marshall offer remain largely unrealized but America will find she is depending, explicitly or by implication, on allies who are uncertain and may perhaps at the critical moment fail her.

There are two choices before America. The first is to seek to solve this root problem of overpopulation, which is at the bottom of everything, by a permanent subsidy. It is not a very satisfactory solution, but is far less unsatisfactory if regarded as a strategic measure pure and simple —which I think it ought to be. Europe then becomes openly an advance garrison, and aid can be given and received with no more embarrassment than is experienced by the troops in Honolulu on

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receipt of their pay. How reliable that garrison would prove in an emergency is of course a question I cannot answer.

The second alternative is the freeing of migration and the ordered transfer of parts of the European population to other areas where there is greater abundance of resources. I believe that this alternative has one factor in its favor. It would create more than any other measure a sense of kinship and common heritage between the peoples concerned. But however that may be, American statesmanship cannot evade the choice of one of these two solutions. Neither is a happy one, neither is intrinsically desirable, but one of them or a combination of the two must be chosen. Otherwise the Marshall plan will simply fail. There is no third way out.

Mr. Taft's remarks which I set at the beginning of this article show him to be completely unaware of the nature and magnitude of the problem with which he has to deal—and I fear he is not alone in this respect.

The Good Uses of Disaster

HERBERT A. KENNY

FOR TWO WEEKS of October I was in Maine covering the forest fires for the Boston *Post*. When people ask me what impressed me most about the forest-fire situation in Maine, I want to tell them it was the inaccuracies in the radio news reports. Newspapermen learn to take even the declarations of a governor with a grain of salt, especially in times of crisis. I don't know if Governor Horace A. Hildreth announced three times that Hulls Cove was wiped out and that Bar Harbor was gone, but the radio kept blaring it into our Mercury all the way over the road from Portland to Mount Desert Island. Besides razing Hulls Cove, the radio evacuated Northeast Harbor, a charming village, one night I was there. The village looked as it always looks on a fall evening. It may have looked a little lovelier because the New England coastline was enveloped in glorious Indian summer weather. Northeast Harbor was never evacuated. Hulls Cove was not wiped out. Bar Harbor, as everyone now knows, was only about one-quarter destroyed. The radio stations that I heard did a poor job the night of the fire. Their reports were inflammatory and, I thought, had the situation been a State-wide affair with big cities involved, they would have promoted panic.

The newspapers got their fingers burned on the "Dunkirk" story: the evacuation of residents from the town pier and the hasty mobilization of all kinds of craft—Coast Guard cutters, navy destroyer-escorts, lobster boats, lush yachts and crumby dories. The bit of drama occurred near dead-line. About 2,000 persons got onto the pier to be rescued, true. Boats put out from as far away as the Boston navy yard in the shadow of Bunker Hill. At the height of the threat, about 400 persons, including half a dozen wimpled nuns, were put into boats and taken away. The rest fully expected to go. At this climactic moment, a road that had been closed by fire opened. The rest of the persons on the pier were taken out of Bar Harbor and off the island that night by truck. The papers went to press before that bit of news caught up with them (there were no telephone or telegraph wires working in Bar Harbor and no electric power in the town), but the afternoon editions straightened the whole thing out, blushing a bit withal.

There is a difference between the rôle of the radio and the rôle of a newspaper at a time like that. The newspaper is not being read while the heat of disaster is under us urging us out of the frying pan. The radio reports are pricking us when we are beside ourselves with concern for our self-protection, when we don't know that we will learn two hours later that only two houses were burned in Hull's Cove and that the whole center of Bar Harbor is untouched by fire; that Northeast Harbor is untouched and Seal Harbor is safe; that the State of Maine is intact and that the world hasn't, as it seems to have at a core of excitement, exploded in our face. But it wasn't the failure of the radio to meet its unique responsibility that impressed me most about the forest fires in Maine.

A woman war correspondent told me that she was almost startled overseas by the spirit of giving among the soldiers. They would share each other's clothes, share cigarettes—"Here, take mine. I'll pick up some more!"—offer to do each other's watch, split their rations with those who had none. Something like this happened in Maine among the fire-fighters, among the dispossessed and among the rescuers. Each time I saw evidence of it, a parody in doggerel kept loping through my mind.

A little bit of disaster
Makes the whole world kin.

Volunteer fire-fighters fought to exhaustion. They slept out-of-doors on the charred bed of a burned-over meadow. They slept on the floor of fire stations and town halls where other volunteers had to pick their steps around them. They slept sitting on stairs; lying on the back of trucks; sitting anywhere there was dry flooring. Awake, they lugged hose through brush and bog and briar; they stood by a quarry where dynamite exploding in the fire might have killed as well as not; they stood with foolhardy doggedness while fire almost surrounded them; they worked forty-

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eight, fifty, fifty-six hours without sleep. They worked until their bodies quit. When the water on Mount Desert Island became questionable, they went waterless until their tongues swelled in their mouths. Bill Burns, who used to polish golf clubs at the Kebo Valley Club, fought with others to save a great estate when, over his shoulder, he could see his own house in flames and no one to defend it. He made no complaint. The fire-fighters asked nothing and gave all they had. One of them was found burned to death in one section of the State. Such might have been the fate of any one of hundreds at Bar Harbor, Kennebunkport, Cape Porpoise or Biddeford.

The dispossessed were equally valiant under different strain. They had suddenly lost almost every material possession they had had. Few had insurance covering the assessed value of their properties, let alone the inflation-swollen value. Heir-looms, private papers, dear letters, those thousand little things that each of us has and cherishes and can't replace were lost in home after home. Some lost not only their homes, but their places of employment. With each of those great estates that burned, half a dozen jobs vanished.

While I was there, watching families evacuating homes, even helping them, if they were pressed and I was free and the fire was near, watching them see their homes go up in flames, watching them when they returned to ash pits where their homes had been, I didn't see a child, man or woman in tears. Once on the crowded streets of Ellsworth, three days after the Bar Harbor fire, I saw a woman cry. She had rushed into the arms of a friend, a neighbor whom she hadn't seen since they set out for the pier together. They had been asking for each other since their parting. They cried, one of them sobbingly, when they met, in relief at each other's well-being, not at any loss.

To receive the homeless and to provide for them, other persons in various towns—I saw it at Kennebunkport and Mount Desert Island—rearranged their homes, their way of living, their daily habits, and their diets to be good neighbors. They gave gladly. They went out of their way to bring one of the dispossessed into their homes. They strained at circumstances in order to be permitted to share with others, to give away their world's goods, to suffer a bit for their fellow man and with their fellow man.

Looking back on it, I remember volunteers hitching rides from 100 miles away to come and fight the fires. I remember one fire department refusing pay for the extra days it worked. I remember a retired army colonel who came from 50 miles away despite disabilities, driving his own jeep, to direct the fire-fighting in the field for three days. For those three days he went without sleep. I remember men working all day and fighting the fire all night without recompense, without even thanks. I remember a store owner in Bar Harbor who remained open under candlelight, giving away his goods. "Some of them pay," he said, "but if they don't, well . . . you give it to them. You don't ask." I remember a fireman saying, "George, I'd like you to move your family in with mine until you can rebuild there."

Later we know there is a reaction. People find exhaustion upon them after the fires are off the front pages. The excitement wears off and the glamor with it. Some who have taken in the homeless begin to chafe under the strange restrictions imposed by the presence of strangers in the house. Paid workers will grumble about the disagreeable work of cleaning up after the fire, of rolling up the hose, repairing the battered fire equipment. Selectmen will become profane totting up the cost of their towns and the loss of tax revenue from property that has vanished. Workers who lost their lives' accumulations will despair of rebuilding. Family relationships will suffer; friendships will be destroyed. We are not cynics, but we know these things.

Yet I like to remember those people of Maine with the transient glory of charity upon them. I wish that there was something other than disaster that could so transform them. I wish that the suffering of the peoples of Europe was close enough to America to make us seek to spend ourselves as the people of Maine spent themselves during their minor disaster. That sort of thing is as much in the nature of us all as it is in the nature of salt.

Fortitudo et Decor

The weak and timorous have need to be
Gathered in clusters into company.
Only the strong can dwell alone, can walk alone.
I think of the beautiful strength of Joachim's daughter
Who carried within her the Word, the voiceless Word
And shaped her white austerity of silence
As synonym and echo to His own.

Strength and beauty, the Proverbs tell me, are her clothing.
I pass her virtues' multiplicity
To halt at this strength; she is rock like the Rock her Son
And images His granite will to justice
And His immutable tranquillity.

Only the strong of soul can keep a secret
Of glory hidden deep. Did Mary tell
The mystery which flowered to life within her?
Not till Elizabeth intoned *Beata*
Did the young virgin sing her canticle.
Her Child was the Father's Word; it was for the Father
To utter Him as He willed.
She was a syllable, beside the Word her Son and Secret
A creature word whom reverence had stilled.

JESSICA POWERS.

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The Stage & Screen

Antony and Cleopatra

ONE SENSES such honesty of intention, plus generosity and an admirable selection of talents, when confronted by this Sornell-McClintic production, I wish it were possible for me to confess to one complete overall impression of excellence, excitement, or what you will. However, I'm afraid my reactions swung from dearth to delight and it is difficult to know how to record them. One thing is certain: in their commendable desire to present the whole of the tragedy (as far as I could tell only odd lines here and there were cut), the producers have delivered themselves a gigantic job in the kind of production they have chosen. As every reader knows, the piece is perhaps more *scened* than any other Shakespeare: characters, people, and small progresses are constantly on and off in places as distant as Alexandria, Athens, and Rome. Add to this our conventional manner of staging, which is to say lavishly naturalistic, with as much scenery, trapping, and color as possible, and you get almost necessarily the eye quarreling with the ear—the monumental lines smothered in gauds—and the attention battered rather than held. And again, as Mr. McClintic has chosen a hurling pace in order, I guess, to shear "the midnight bell," it is almost impossible to keep up with the story as well as experience the playing and, somehow or other, assess the Leo Kerz mountings and Valentina gear. It seems to me that, granting the Broadway requirement of as much *show* as possible, it would have been wiser for Miss Cornell and her associates to have arranged a version, rather than attempting to embrace the entire script; or, and I would vastly prefer this choice, to have retained the original play and then employed the architectural simplicities of the traditional Elizabethan stage and to have concentrated, for splendor, on lights and dress. I must admit at once that this may be plain prejudice on my part as I found Mr. Kerz's designs rather more 19th century in conception than anyway original or authentic. The Egyptian scenes reminded me of nothing so much as the "Aida's" of my childhood, and his incessant traveller curtain, stamped with implausible knee-high circles was a sad distraction.

However, to reach at long last the credit end, the work is extraordinarily spoken, often brilliantly played. It is interesting to consider Godfrey Tearle's Antony, which is all decadent, extremely powerful, and obviously a thoughtful attack. For my part, I should have preferred a more progressive debacle—it is hard here always to find the hero in the wreck—but particularly in the latter scenes, Mr. Tearle does project the size of his tragedy and the monument scene was truly moving. Miss Cornell is prehaps more hampered by the rapidity and jerkiness of the machinery. I found her more impressive as the queen than the woman, although one imagines, with the run, the performance will adhere more, and the enormous skips between archness and royalty will be accomplished more smoothly. It's almost an insurmountable task, but certainly, without this incredible volatility, neither Plutarch, nor the playwright, nor all of history and legend, can be justified at all. On the score of absolute excellence, Kent Smith's Enobarbus, and Ralph Clanton's Octavius top the list. Mr. Kent's humor, fine diction, most of all, his honesty, build into moments when the entire house leans forward, sighs and cheers. And it is well balanced by Mr. Clanton's portrayal of the young "Augustus", who seemed to me the absolute figure of a Roman—in decorum, physical beauty, strength and severeness. Acting indeed. These are firmly supported by the entire cast, Robert Duke's Dolabella being especially notable. I thought Lenore Ulric's vital Charmian somewhat too moved to be moving at the death, her playing warm but unsteady throughout. But enough of quibbles. If the whole seems somewhat overwhelming, it is long enough, varied enough, poetry enough, for all to choose and gain. (*at the Martin Beck*)

Ballet Theatre

A SHORT report will confirm that the company is dancing as excellently as ever in their current run at the City Center, with especial emphasis on Alonzo, Youskevitch, Kaye, and Kriza. A Ballanchine premiere—Theme and Variations to Tchaikowsky's "Suite No. 3 for Orchestra"—electrified the house, and I was especially impressed with this year's performance of Robbins's Interplay, a loud reversal of opinion, as I thought the piece fatuous on first view years ago. With the work of such organizations as this, the City Theatre maintains its intelligent and exciting standard of entertainment. I can only repeat the tickets are worth it, time and again. (*at the City Center*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Imports

THE ARRIVAL in this country of an unusually large number of films from abroad should once again make Hollywood (and us) aware that American pictures, though technically best, are by no means the most thoughtful or artistic. I'm sorry that so many of these imports are being released almost simultaneously, because I cannot do full justice to each in a short review; however, this week's column indicates the caliber of these films as a group.

Perhaps the most talked about of the new arrivals is *"To Live in Peace,"* an Italian film that is unpretentious, moving and bubbling with international good will. To an Italian village, so small and remote that it is commandeered by only one German during the war, come two American soldiers, one of whom, a Negro, is wounded. A family of peasants shelter these two men, although they realize what will happen if they are caught. One night the lonely German soldier, visiting this family, gets drunk on good Italian wine, while the recuperating Negro, hidden in the wine cellar, gets drunk too. First thing you know, the German, the American and the whole Italian family are having a whirl of a good time: drinking, making music and dancing. When the revelry spills over into the village, the people think the war is over and the celebration grows. But the next day's headaches

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are only minor pain compared to the return of war's reality and tragedy. Director Luigi Zampa has given this movie an appealing earthy glow; without becoming pedantic, its lessons are obvious. The performances, especially that of the fine actor, Aldo Fabrizi, who played the priest in "The Open City," are unusually stirring. The two Americans are played by American actors, Gar Moore and Negro John Kitzmiller. I'm not sure, in these days when everyone is so sensitive about "anti" this-and-that and racial prejudice, that it is wise to show a Negro getting so uproariously drunk and busting up things; but from the point of view of the Italians, who made this film, I am sure that nothing untoward was intended. Peace for men of good will is the dominant note and it comes through beautifully.

The biggest surprise among these imports is that Jean Cocteau's new film is hardly surrealistic at all. He has told the famous fairy tale, *"Beauty and the Beast,"* almost straight; and his wild flights of fancy turn up only in the Beast's palace where candelabras are held by human arms popping out of the walls and statues have real faces. The Beast, played by Jean Marais, is of course appropriately beastly—until he is changed into a handsome prince by the love of Beauty (who is made very beautiful indeed by Josette Day). The story moves a little too slowly at first, but once the action gets going in the Beast's extraordinary castle the whole piece becomes weirdly compelling. Children may be frightened out of their wits by the realistic touches in this vivid French film, but adults will be fascinated by its décor, costumes and interesting allegory. Irving Drutman's literate English sub-titles are helpful; however, Cocteau is not a film maker who depends on the spoken word. He lets the camera and actors do the work.

Julien Duvivier is another director who knows a thing or two about making movies, and he has exhibited his skill effectively in the French film, *"Panic,"* which uses cinema much more effectively than any films he made in Hollywood. "Panic" is strictly an adult affair, so don't take your kids or aunt who shocks easily. It is about two evil people, played by Viviane Romance and Paul Bernard, who influence the citizens of a bourgeois Paris suburb into thinking that an eccentric bachelor (Michael Simon) is guilty of the murder committed by one of them. This is an unusually cynical film; at no time are your sympathies with any of the leads or the supporting players; you certainly have no feeling for the two evildoers; you don't particularly care about the bachelor whose misanthropic attitude toward his neighbors and whose silence about the crime definitely rub one the wrong way. Furthermore, the people of the neighborhood are a pretty unpleasant lot too. What gives this film its force is the good acting and Duvivier's excellent direction. The local color in the suburb and the carnival atmosphere that works up to a high pitch and finally becomes united with the mob scenes during the chase after the persecuted bachelor are portrayed in gripping cinema. "Panic" is by no means a pretty picture, but it does succeed in warning against the dangers of mob action.

The French have also sent over *"Volpone,"* which is

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based on the play by Ben Jonson. On the stage "Volpone" may still work out, but as a French movie to be shown to Americans, the film is too static and depends too much on dialogue which the English sub-titles cannot handle. The cast, led by Harry Bauer as the unscrupulous Volpone, and Louis Jouvet as Mosca, his even more unscrupulous steward, is excellent. Although Director Maurice Tourneur did not succeed in getting action or real cinematic values into the script written by Jules Romains and Stefan Zweig, he did succeed in portraying a thoroughly corrupt Venetian society. Whether you find this subject matter entertaining depends on your taste in bawdy, though handsomely decorated, themes.

In contrast to all this French sophistication is a perfectly charming film from Australia called *"Bush Christmas."* It tells the story of five children who follow some horse thieves into the bush during their Christmas holiday, which as you know is in summer down under. The story itself is extremely simple, but it has been so well written, produced and directed by Ralph Smart and so nicely acted by the engaging children, that the film is one of those rare treats that keep you laughing and shuddering with joy and suspense. Among its assets are some gorgeous scenery in wild Australian places, Director Smart's good use of camera in telling the story (he wisely lets the bush noises take over when dialogue and narrator are given a rest) and the unaffected performances of the children. At times the music gets too emphatic and one of the horse thieves is much too coy for my taste, but these minor errors detract very little from the film's effectiveness. Our Hollywood kids could take a lesson from these Australian youngsters. If "The Innocent Voyage" is ever filmed, these good juvenile actors should be kept in mind. You should be warned, however, that one scene, in which the hungry children eat rattlesnakes and the little Aborigine boy eats live grubs, is not for people with squeamish stomachs. Don't let this sequence keep anyone away from "Bush Christmas," for the movie is really a must for anyone interested in child psychology and good entertainment—and this covers a lot of people.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Labor Movement

Truman and the Unions

THE REACTION of American labor to President Truman's program for the special session of Congress is, in general, a favorable one. And if Truman can bring himself to put up a decent fight for his own program, the chances are that he may solidify a somewhat shaky labor support for '48.

On foreign policy, of course, he runs into the determined resistance of the Communist Party and it is already evident that "the Line" would have to change drastically to swing the CP-controlled unions into the Truman camp by next November. Already we are seeing a full-scale offensive under way to sabotage the Marshall Plan. But more of that later.

On domestic policy the issues and the opposition strategy are less clear-cut, but certain features already begin to take shape. Truman's call for price control and rationing, at least on a limited basis, can only be interpreted as a victory for his more liberal advisors (notably Schwellenbach, McGrath and Nourse) and it has gone far to counteract the effect of that confused and confusing press conference, the one that identified such controls with "police-state methods."

President William Green of the AFL has endorsed the ten-point program that the President asked Congress to adopt in order to check the growing inflation. Green expressed a doubt, however, that price control could work unless it were extended to everything, and he also entered his more or less compulsory dissent on wage controls. But he agreed with Truman that the very restoration of power to curb prices and wages should have a healthy effect on the economy.

The top command of the CIO met on December 3, but it is evident, from what Phil Murray has been saying to date, that they would endorse the program, with the probable exception of the wage controls. Some of the more conservative officials of the AFL may not agree, but most American labor leaders are convinced that a return to price control and rationing are necessary to stop the inflationary spiral. And even the more militant ones —at least those who do their own thinking—are beginning to realize that it would be a sound bargain to trade another round of wage increases for an effective stabilization of the cost of living.

An example of this was the position taken by the Reutherite, or "new look," version of the United Auto Workers at their Atlantic City convention. This was to call for "quick Congressional action to stop inflation or, lacking such action, demands for higher wages."

The Stalinists will of course sabotage that program too if they can, but fortunately, and thanks be to God, their power to sabotage is by no means as extensive in this country as it is in France or Italy.

They will continue, however, to take advantage of the stop-and-go, which-way-is-the-wind-blowing, should-I-get-my-feet-wet maneuvers of the Truman administration. They will also continue to take advantage of the disunity, indecision and occasional cowardice of their opponents within the labor movement.

A good example of the latter can be found at a recent meeting of the New York membership of the National Maritime Union, CIO. This is a union in which there is now going on a hot little struggle for power, and for ideological advantage, between the CP and anti-CP factions.

At this meeting Paul Palazzi, New York port agent and a leading Stalinist, delivered a long harangue against the Marshall Plan, during which he attacked James B. Carey, secretary-treasurer of the CIO, who has lately been in Paris trying unsuccessfully to sell the Marshall Plan to the World Federation of Trade Unions. Palazzi pointed out that Carey had no right to represent the CIO as being in favor of the Marshall Plan because at the CIO's convention in Boston the delegates did not endorse the plan as such. "A general resolution on relief was passed," said Palazzi.

And Palazzi is right. Because Phil Murray, and other top CIO leaders, were afraid to provoke a fight that might call public attention to the division in CIO ranks, a wishy-washy, all-things-to-all-men statement was drawn up, and unanimously passed. It was clear from the

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speeches of these leaders, and from the reception given to Marshall himself, that an explicit endorsement of the plan would have carried by an overwhelming vote.

Their stupid, obstructionist opposition to the relief and rebuilding of Europe is the wide-open, gaping hole in the Communists' armor. The CIO lost a marvelous opportunity to drive a crushing blow through that hole. The Palazzis of the labor movement are now making the most of their good fortune. JOHN C. CORT.

Expatriates End

ANNE FREMANTLE

GERTRUDE STEIN and Henry Miller are two excellent examples of the *antean* American, of the American that must go back every so often and kiss the old European earth. For both, it would seem that the normal breathe in, breathe out, of the creative artist can only take place on a bi-continental level, and that for neither is patriotism *pur et simple* enough: both require two "spots to prove" instead of Kipling's "one . . . beloved over all."* Both Miss Stein and Mr. Miller are intensely serious artists, and there is nothing contradictory to this in the fact that both are very often very funny, sometimes deliberately so. Mr. Miller is simply man made angry; Miss Stein has passed beyond that. Mr. Miller, too, still needs his audience; after each good rant you can hear him catching his breath, listening for the reader reactions. But, as Gertrude Stein insisted, "from consciousness of audience come all the evils of thinking, writing and creating." She has learned to do also without this; even is no audience to herself: "I am not I when I see." Her total acceptance of the limitations of her public, as of her own, is away beyond Miller's total rejection. New Directions has just brought out Volume II of Henry Miller's "air-conditioned nightmare," called "Remember to Remember" ($3.75), whilst the Yale University Press has just issued a posthumous work by Gertrude Stein entitled "Four In America" (suppose George Washington had been a novelist, General Grant a religious leader, Wilbur Wright a painter, Henry James a general) with a long, generous and intensely illuminating introduction by Thornton Wilder ($3.75).

Side by side, to read these two books and compare their authors is to feel them as examples of positive and negative, as illustrations both of the Chinese duality, ying and yang, and of the male-and-female-created-He-them. And to be intensely proud of two such Americans.

Both books are made up of essays about people, for writers are concerned most with people, more than with things, or with ideas. And both writers are intensely concerned with the problem of communication. Henry Miller has a very interesting passage comparing the creative processes in writing and in painting. "Writing is liquid, not plastic. In painting the wrestling has to be done on the canvas . . . a painting is a live thing, both in the process and in the final result; whereas a piece of writing, once it is done, is dead, for the writer, at any rate. Whatever pertains to thought is dead the moment it is born . . . it *was* alive during the moment of gestation, but in the act of giving birth, the child dies."

Mr. Wilder begins his introduction by describing Gertrude Stein answering a question from one of her students at the University of Chicago about her most famous line, "a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose." She explained that when the language was new, as it was with Chaucer and Homer, the poet could name the thing, O moon, O sea, O love, and the thing was really there. But now "you all have seen hundreds of poems about roses and you know in your bones the rose is not there. . . . Yes, I'm no fool, but I think that in that line the rose is red for the first time in English poetry for a hundred years."

Both writers can be astonishingly amusing. Henry Miller's "Astrological Fricasse" is, quite literally, a riot, and his Mrs. Rubiol is one of the absurdest characters yet invented, either when trying desperately to remember something she had never seen, or tacking the wrong titles to wronger authors. And Gertrude Stein is funny too, as when she changes from the inspired seriousness with which she "found the difference between Shakespeare's sonnets and Shakespeare's plays. What is the difference between accident and coincidence? An accident is when a thing happens. A coincidence is when a thing is going to happen and does." To her puzzlement over "those who run can read. . . . There was a moment many years ago when I had a meaning for it but now I have forgotten that and now I have none." Probably Henry Miller is at his very best in his essay on obscenity; for he is at his most serious. "Only where strict bodily discipline is observed for the purpose of union or communion with God, has the purpose of sex ever been faced squarely," he writes. "Those who have achieved emancipation by this route have, of course, not only liberated themselves from the tyranny of sex but from all other tyrannies of the flesh. . . . In lieu of copulating," he adds, "they create." Or, as Gertrude Stein puts it, "A great deal has to do with everything. And marrying."

Both authors are tremendously good Americans, because they are wholly concerned. America is the background of all their thinking and writing. For Miller, this background is "a sad place . . . full of places. Empty places. And all these empty places are crowded. Just jammed with empty souls." Whilst Gertrude saw that Americans have no home because their whole country is their home. Americans, she declares, are only "happy when they are failures" because an American is "what he is, not what he wills." Which doesn't mean, as Mr. Wilder points out, that Americans are will-less. By no means. Nor that they are passive or ineffective. "The true passivity," as Mr. Thornton Wilder points out, "that is the true slavery and the true ineffectiveness, is

*Please excuse one tense for the living Mr. Miller and dead Miss Stein: the historic present.

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to wish and to wait, and to yearn and to conspire." Indeed for all his dislike of America, and discomfort in it, Henry Miller, too, sees this tremendous immediacy of Americans. "We are the most inventive people on earth . . . we despise work and yet we toil like slaves." Never thinking beforehand of the consequences of a new invention, we yet cope with the consequences when the consequences come.

And, in spite of continual disillusionment (and how Miller can describe the etiolated, emasculated blotting-paper Americans call bread! And how he can suggest the anonymity, the forlornness, the tastelessness of Main Street!) Miller yet has a faith Walt Whitman would have envied. "Despite all our failings, the world persists in believing that it is out of the American race that the new man will one day emerge. . . . Gary Cooper in some of his parts comes nearer to personifying this sort of American . . . he has . . . the naivete and resourcefulness of the lone individual, the sensitivity of the artist, and the childlike trust which is often mistaken for immaturity." And also, a look of bewilderment; not of a wanderer, for his is a lost look. But rather "the eyes of a being . . . accustomed to interstellar spaces, who is himself a cosmos." And in this new product, that is purely American, "one perceives the common man freeing himself of the chrysalis, taking unto himself a distinct personality." Such a man has simplicity, directness, humility "and that gentleness of soul which marks the chosen ones." As Gertrude Stein puts it, "there is no no in American religion . . . nor either is there wind nor a window no not in American religion." This American is unlocalized, compared with a European, volatile instead of terrene. Gertrude Stein shows how different American life is from the daily island life of the English. "In America the daily everything was not the daily living, and generally speaking there is not a daily everything. They do not live every day they do not." And because of this bigness, this absence of identification of the average American with a local habitation and a name, because of this humanity "there is no danger in American religion nor in American war nor in American no no danger. . . . There is no leading in American religion in American anything," so Gertrude Stein puts it.

Yet it is just this intense concern for seeing and being aware of what an American is which makes both Henry Miller and Gertrude Stein infinitely sensitive to other people. As Henry Miller shows in his essay on France, and Gertrude Stein in hers on Henry James (which, as might be suspected, is also about England). Miller has a true infatuation for France. He sees her, not through rose colored spectacles, but with scalpel eyes; he scrapes her to her skeleton, and shows how infinitely desirable she is, as lovely in her bones as in her *toilette de bal.* "No stench, nor dirt, no ugliness can bar my serenity," he writes, remembering her, and describes how the true Frenchman loves most about his country the small things "what he can hold in his two hands, what he can walk around, what he can encompass with a sweep of the eye." And Henry Miller conveys the certainty of France: "I never worry about France. It would be like worrying about the earth." And he contrasts France that is above all body (*"le coeur du monde"* as my washerwoman assured me) with America which is a state of mind, a way of life. And prefers France, "the maggots which crawl, the song of the rotting flesh. . . . We know that Europe is alive because it demands food, clothing, medicine. Whereas the 'Sanforized' citizen sees only the smallness, the homeliness which inspire him with contempt, or pity." And how well Henry Miller understands French Catholicism: compare his "the virtue of France is that she made her Catholics catholic. She even made her atheists catholic, and that is saying a great deal" with Gertrude Stein's remarks on American religion, American sky, American dying. So, at the end, these two great expatriates do not have to come home, because they never went away. With lancet and probe for armor, these are valiant Americans, because they have suffered to discover what America is, and why, and to relate America with Europe, with the world, and with the Creator of the world.

More Books of the Week

Cervantes. Aubrey Bell. University of Oklahoma. $3.00.

IN HIS quadricentennial year, Miguel de Cervantes ranks appreciably higher in the literary hierarchy than Dante and stands shoulder to shoulder with Shakespeare. Yet his mark on the public consciousness, even the higher reaches of that consciousness, is more apparent than real. Despite unqualified praise of his genius—the rhapsodic reviews of Professor Aubrey Bell's recent study are a case in point—the works of Cervantes are little read. Of the "Quixote," Part I alone is easily available, in atrocious translation. But whereas the entire "Divina Commedia" is periodically published and the complete plays appear in innumerable editions, the titles of most of Cervantes's books would stump the experts.

Even in the Spanish-speaking world, these undeservedly obscure writings are hard to get. Espasa Calpe, whose Colección Austral straddles Latin America with greater ubiquity than do Modern Library editions here or Tauchnitz in pre-war Europe, can include in its catalogue the Archpriest of Hita's "Libro de Buen amor"—hardly a book for drugstore sales—but lists of Cervantes only the "Quixote" and the "Novelas ejemplares."

Clearly Cervantes, less read than the romantic pigmies, lives but fitfully in the thoughts of the very young, who have dipped into abridged or bowdlerized editions, and of scholars, searching for quotations and parallels. It is perhaps as a guilt offering that the reviewers have thrown all caution to the winds in commenting on the 400th birthday of Cervantes. They are caught short, somehow ashamed that this distillate of a golden age in a golden land has been kept in a dark corner with the undrinkable gin.

The "why" of this may be a fit starting point for inquiry by a literary psychoanalyst. Certainly it is not a question of readability. On this count Cervantes surpasses both Dante and Shakespeare. For the compression of Dante's *terza rima,* the austerity of his theological argument, the complexity of his allusion, are imposing barriers to popular taste. And though Shakespeare has been exegesized to the point of extinction by high-school teachers, his plays are still for an intellectual élite, kindling to flame only in performance.

With Cervantes, as with God and the Bible, there is a relative scale of perceptibility and identification, strongly appealing on many levels. The impudently picaresque and the provokingly dialectical are in "Quixote"

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for the seeking. And all this rich interplay of humor and philosophy, of the worldly and the folk-rooted, of the particular and the universal, is contained in a novel of movement and episode, set in a land which throughout the modern era has been seen as the proud abiding place of man's somber questionings.

What comes clear and sharp in the agony of the *cante hondo* on Holy Week, what is highlighted in an ironic flutter of fans as the gaudy matador pavannes with death, issues forth cruel and revealing in the laughter and metaphor of the "Quixote" and the "Novelas." The color and pulse of Spain are here for tourists, and innocent amusement for children. But below this simple surface, Spain's soul—which is man's soul in essence—is unhurriedly laid open. Who but a philosopher can look into these pages and with equanimity see under the shape of the fat man laughing the structure of the bare bone. The "Quixote" of Cervantes is a passionary of man, and its vision cuts too deeply into the nerve centers of our mortal preoccupations. There is small comfort and considerable terror for unpropped moderns there.

That is why Anglo-Saxons and romantics subconsciously reject "Don Quixote." Under its hard Castilian light, the wilful optimism of their thinking is exposed as *papier mâché,* and badly contrived at that. The college essayist touches delicately on the conflicting actualities evoked by Cervantes—and even Professor Bell takes time out from the overwhelming scholarship of his *explication de texte* to plead his viewpoint. The problems of idealism and realism, of shadow and substance, refuse obfuscation; they are the pertinent foci of man's struggle to see himself whole, and in relation to his universe.

It is not an epistemological gambit to Cervantes, nor is he indulging in Platonic calisthenics or coy fancy by personifying in the Rueful Don and Sancho Panza the two opposites. In the "Quixote," as in life, the demarcation is not precise, and in the final analysis it is hard to tell which is the Knight, which the Squire. Dr. Johnson kicked the stone and was satisfied that he had confuted Bishop Berkley. But the windmill which toppled Quixote overturned Sancho as well. In our time's plague, the Squire is bemused; we have murdered the Knight and sold Rosinante to the glue factory. But we have not confuted Cervantes.

Ramon Sender has pointed out that Cervantes is in exile on his 400th birthday, but it is not from Spain alone that he is banished. He is a refugee from all Creation. And though the world of intellectuals genuflects at the mention of Don Quixote's author, it still keeps an uneasy distance from his works. Yet Sancho and Quixote triumph, for they are ultimately and devastatingly one, meeting in the eternal defeat of earthbound men.

RALPH DE TOLEDANO.

Thomas Wolfe. Herbert J. Muller. New Directions. $2.00.

NEW DIRECTIONS has published a new addition to its Makers of Modern Literature Series that is much more modest (and this is not meant as a backhanded compliment or a hint of limitation) than several of the previous works, and just as competent.

In this book Herbert Muller states the case for Thomas Wolfe; and he states it well. He attempts to show by an examination of the novels that there was a definite artistic growth and enlargement of social awareness in Wolfe from the time when he wrote "Look Homeward, Angel," to the time he wrote his final volumes.

Fully conscious of serious deficiencies in Wolfe, Muller will not accept the stand of critics who say that the writer's editor was his finest artistic tool, and he points out many examples to show that Wolfe was the important person in the making of the finished works which bore his name. And he insists that these books represent some of the most important contributions to our literature.

The inability of Wolfe to produce in later years (Muller believes that "Look Homeward, Angel" was the most successful novel) a book equal to the promise indicated in his first was due chiefly to his inability to resolve the problems of his own existence. The immaturity and indecision of his later novels was the consequence of his own immaturity and indecision. He could not, as Joyce, for example, did, live a lonely, bitter, rebellious life, filled with disappointment and sadness; at the same time take on the rôle of artist, "remain aloof, paring his finger-nails." The frenzy and frustration could not be transmuted, only transcribed, and repeatedly transcribed. So that with all the rich imagery and all the rough rhythms of passion there is also a wearisome resounding of each rage, a continual restatement of the injustice and the bleakness of life, varying in proportion and intensity according to the mood of the author when he wrote. The words of his heroes, Eugene Gant and George Webber, are never theirs so much as Thomas Wolfe's.

Now Muller admits the naiveté of Wolfe. But, while he believes that it accounted for much that was bad in Wolfe's writing, he believes also that it is responsible for much that is very good in Wolfe. He thinks that the coming-of-age brought about in the later novels an economy and an artistic objectivity which was missing at the beginning—but that it was also the cause of less satisfying fiction.

Muller assigns an important place to myth in his study of Thomas Wolfe just as Harry Levin did in his book on James Joyce. This may merely indicate a forthcoming publication of "Folk Tales and Fables" on the part of New Directions, because the analogy seems to me to be the most uncertain thesis of the entire criticism. The search of Wolfe (and of his heroes) is related to the search of the typical American for more and more, better and better:—the unfulfilled dream of limitless progress, limitless wealth, happiness without end. And this, I suppose, is true. But it is a little surprising that Mr. Muller has let it go at that, since he is one of the few critics to explain that the "great ideas by which men and nations live are usually platitudes," solutions which are known by the poorest, humblest, most ignorant.

The striving of Wolfe is not merely the exemplification of an American myth, it is an illustration of a universal myth. It is one in which artists (because of their heightened sensibility) have always been particularly noticeable, and one in which they will continue to play the most tragic and voluble rôles. The searchings of Wolfe differ not much from the searchings of Dostoievsky in the black streets of St. Petersburg; of Rimbaud in the cafés of Paris; of Joyce round Stephen's Green and the Dublin sea wall.

His wanderings and conflicts had religious overtones which, I think, are not sufficiently indicated by Mr. Muller. His aberrations, and his consequent disappointing performances in fiction were the result of his faith

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in creatures and institutions which are unhappily soiled with imperfection and evil. So Wolfe was constantly attracted by the goodness he saw, but he was immediately repelled by the defects. His irresolution, as with many, was the result of religion's failure to hold men—more correctly, of men's failure to hold to religion. Wolfe had no religion but himself.

He clung, as Mr. Muller says, to the idea of a great, saving America. But because all Americans were not like himself he could be distressed by dishonest, bigoted people, by sectarian institutions and bourgeois methods, he could grieve at the absence of beauty, and go off to worship his brother, Loneliness. He attempted to take root in something whose imperfections he could not hide or destroy and whose goodness he could not perpetuate. He sought for an omnipotent value in what T. S. Gregory calls the "idealistic and magical cosmology"—in art, in "love," in travel, in bridges, trains, loneliness; and he arrived resentfully at the same spot from which he had begun.

This does not mean, of course, that Wolfe would have solved his artistic problems if he had come upon a more suitable faith than "America." But he might have formulated a statement more acceptable than the one which he alternately affirmed and denied.

Mr. Muller feels that the credo expressed in a final letter to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, is evidence of Wolfe's maturation, and his arrival at an objective, affirmative theme: "I believe that we are lost in America, but I believe that we shall be found." But Wolfe had said that many times before; had he lived he would have denied it many times. Nor is Wolfe's calmer objectivity at the end of his life proof that he had yet become a better novelist.

His first novel is valuable because he accomplished on a large scale what few Americans have done. He depicted by living, robust characters in tense, dramatic scenes the very antagonisms and torments which beset him and which afflict many men of feeling in our day. It was an accurate, interesting representation of Wolfe's own difficulties.

But his later novels could only be repetitions because he seemed never to understand that the struggle for truth (or goodness or beauty, whatever you wish) is an unequal one; or if he did understand, his knowledge made him no wiser.

Since he had nothing but "America," bright, gloomy, wise, ignorant, kind, vicious, brave, fearful, alert, torpid America, he continued to prowl in his "tumult and torture," tethered so that he could go just so far, one time saluting, another cursing, ecstatic then despairing, his last always becoming his first. GEORGE MILES.

Speaking Frankly. James F. Byrnes. Harper. $3.50.

WHATEVER other impressions one may carry away after reading Mr. Byrnes' book, one is impressed with the tireless industry of Mr. Byrnes himself. How long, one wonders, can our public servants keep up the unending drain upon their physical energies. If a Secretary of State had but one task—negotiating with the exasperating Mr. Molotov—it would entitle him to retirement on a liberal pension after one year. The futile and exhausting negotiations at the conference in Paris in the fall of 1946 might in themselves have worn out the patience of the most placid of men, but when Mr. Wallace at home opened up with his blast during the most delicate stage of the negotiations, Mr. Byrnes was ready to take the next plane back to Washington.

Mr. Byrnes writes with commendable sincerity and candor. Despite the difficulties of dealing with the Russians and all the provocation toward pessimism, he still firmly believes that peace can be maintained. He believes that much of the Russian obstinacy is due to two things: one, the traditional Russian tendency towards an imperialistic Pan-Slavism; and two, a feeling of weakness and insecurity. How does one deal with such a situation? A policy of firmness is his answer. The Russians are shrewd and adroit bargainers. In time they back down at a display of persistent and strong opposition, but from this it follows that America must remain strong in a military and economic sense.

He is willing to concede that all the difficulties of dealing with the Russians do not stem from a Muscovite drive for power. The factor of language plays a part. The Russian language as a vehicle for communication would seem to permit of an amazing variety of interpretations. In addition, the Russian opposition to the Marshall Plan Mr. Byrnes ascribes to their fears of American inspection in the operation of the plan. He does not believe that the opposition stems from a desire of the Russians to see Europe plunged into economic misery in order that communism may thrive.

Without question, the book is an important contribution to a further understanding of our tangled foreign relations.

JEROME C. KERWIN.

A Catholic Reader. Edited by Charles A. Brady. Desmond and Stapleton. $3.50.

THIS is a delightful anthology, full of good things ranging from Maurice Baring's brilliant short story "Dr. Faust's Last Day" to G. K. Chesterton's "On Pigs as Pets." The claim of the publishers that it offers a wide selection to those who prize the perennial values, especially when they are expressed with wit and grace, is abundantly justified. Here one can find "Campion's Brag" and Leonard Feeney's very funny "An Introduction to Michael Burt," and there are polished excerpts from Newman and William Roper's "Sir Thomas More." It is a book to read and browse in and enjoy.

EDWARD LITTLEJOHN.

Man Into Beast: Strange Tales of Transformation. Edited by A. C. Spectorsky. Doubleday. $3.75.

THIS IS an excellent collection of strange tales by well known writers. There is Saki, Stephen Vincent Benet, Isak Dinesen, Ben Hecht, Dorothy Ayres, Kafka and others.

"The transformation of human beings into animals . . . is a persisting element in the myths of all the peoples of the earth," writes Mr. Spectorsky in his preface. Yet I was surprised to find that so many modern authors had written upon the subject—and so well. For the most pleasing element in the book is the average firstrate quality of the writing. (It is unfortunate in this respect that the jacket design gives no intimation of the quality of the work within.)

The stories are well chosen for range—from the sheer realistic horror of Kafka to Theodore Pratt's amusing tale of Henry Limpet who, as a fish, becomes a lieutenant in the U. S. Navy and their own secret weapon. Nor

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should one omit mention of "The Monkey" by Isak Dinesen for its charm and sensitivity. It is one of the best short stories I have read anywhere.

In a few of the stories the surprise element is eliminated by the mere fact that they are collected under this theme. But this never succeeds in spoiling a story, and the problem enters only a few. Many more merit being discussed individually, but there is not space to do them justice. Even those who never read ghost stories or fantastic tales must be pleased with this book.

ANN HUNTER.

Silver Kings. Oscar Lewis. Knopf. $4.00.

DO THE names Mackay, Fair, Flood, and O'Brien mean anything to you? Probably not. In a confused fashion, you may associate the name Mackay with the Postal Telegraph. It is true that he was identified with the company just mentioned, but the name should be associated primarily with Virginia City, Nevada, and the Comstock lode, the fabulously rich deposit of silver found there in the 1870's.

The story is what might be called a true fairy tale. Tremendous wealth was accumulated by each of the men, but the money failed to purchase contentment for them, even though Mackay's monthly income, for long periods, was over $800,000. Mackay and Fair operated the mines in Virginia City; Flood and O'Brien, in San Francisco, manipulated the mining stock in which the four were interested. These men also controlled most of the companies selling supplies to the mines; moreover, they also owned the mills in which the ore was processed, and charged the corporations accordingly.

No stocks fluctuated with more wild abandon than did the silver stocks in the 1870's. Hale and Norcross stock jumped in one year from $300 to $10,000 per share. Anyone who had bought one hundred shares of Consolidated Virginia stock in 1871 at eight dollars per share would have been able to sell his holdings in 1875 for $1,280,000. It is estimated that silver worth $350,000,000 came out of Virginia City in the period 1873-1878. But the descent was even more rapid than the ascent. In 1879 the stream of silver dried up; staggering losses were sustained by many who had bought highly inflated stocks. Fortunes were spent in the 1880's and 1890's looking for silver that was not there. Many refused to believe that the possibility of rich strikes in Virginia City had passed.

Even while it lasted, it was not all glorious. Small investors, and even large ones at times, were wiped out by crashes in silver stocks. Some of the miners worked in shafts that were five thousand feet deep, in temperatures as high as 140 degrees Fahrenheit. They worked hard, lived hard, and died young. Nature demanded a high price for the metal she surrendered. Mr. Lewis is to be thanked for bringing to life, by painstaking research, not only an almost unbelievable decade, but also the four men who more than others deserve to be remembered as the silver kings.

PAUL KINIERY.

Undercover Girl. Elizabeth P. MacDonald. Macmillan. $3.00.

AFTER all the nonsense we are used to hearing and reading and seeing about the work of the OSS during the war, it is gratifying to find at last a firsthand account of the adventures of a bona fide "undercover girl," prefaced by none other than General Donovan, wartime Director of the OSS.

However, Elizabeth MacDonald's story, although she writes convincingly and with humor, suffers from being loaded down by details and would perhaps have gained in interest what it might have lost in length, if its eighteen chapters had been condensed into ten. It is to be hoped that some of our "digest" magazines may attempt to give a shorter version in which the excitement and tension and crispness may be maintained without a let-down.

And yet, paradoxically enough, the abundance of petty details is a definite asset in what is undoubtedly the most interesting part of the book: that which touches China. In giving an account of her work as an intelligence agent in the MO (Morale Operations) branch of the OSS in Kunming, the author, unwittingly perhaps, does more to explain China and its atmosphere and attitude during the war than many a political treatise. With the "light pen" of a good newspaperwoman and a talent for description besides, Mrs. MacDonald draws a strong and vivid picture of wartime China. For that, and for the insight which her book gives us on the importance of "black" morale intelligence (subversive propaganda), she is indeed to be thanked.

SILVIA BRULL.

Nothing So Strange. James Hilton. Little. $2.75.

A YOUNG American scientist working on the mathematics of nuclear structure goes to work in Vienna with a world renowned German scientist. The outbreak of World War II finds him there but he goes on working with the detachment and scientific integrity of mind associated with research until the nazis catch up with him, through the professor with whom he works, and he finds himself involved in a drama not only personal but with world-wide consequences. Back in America, suspected by the FBI, he vainly tries to bring his knowledge to the service of his own country. Finally he accepts a minor position at the atomic plant which he quits after a while, and he is about to get into serious trouble with the FBI when the American girl who has known all the details of his behaviour in Austria and Germany straightens things up.

A good story even if the tricks are somewhat too evident. It has real value in that it recalls to the public mind what nazi methods were like, and, above all, it brings into full view the dilemma which faces the true scientist to-day. In a few pages toward the end James Hilton manages to put across a few stiff questions regarding scientific secrets, state hired scientists and "not exactly *holy* science." That this message is delivered with the trimmings of a good love screen story all the better, that it be heard, listened to and taken to mind and heart by all.

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

The Apostolic Fathers. Translated by F. X. Glimm, J. M. F. Marique and G. G. Walsh. Cima Publishing Co. $4.00.

THE ENGLISH speaking Catholics have long felt the need of an up-to-date translation of the major works of the Fathers of the Church. Patristic studies have made great progress since the appearance of the last big editions produced by the English and American Protestants. Moreover, the study of Latin and Greek has declined, and we have changed a lot since the indefatigable and dauntless Abbe Migne asserted

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confidently that no priest could rest content without a complete set of his publications. The ideal solution would be an accurate, scholarly translation of the best texts into readable English under auspices that would guarantee doctrinal correctness. The production of such a work in this country would be a gratifying and significant proof of the intellectual maturity of the American Catholics and would confer a lasting benefit on many outside their ranks. The announcement that such a set was being attempted here was received with a joy that was slightly diminished by the news that we are to have two sets, and that certain important works are to appear in both. Those who wondered if we could produce one set may well wonder how we can produce two and how each is to receive adequate support. They may find some consolation for this division of limited resources in the thought that each may provide a stimulus for the other.

"The Apostolic Fathers" is the first of seventy-two volumes which the editors hope to publish within six years. Here in unadorned English may be found the full text of the Didache, the Shepherd of Hermes, the Letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, and several other precious relics of the early Church. The conventional apparatus of scholarship is almost entirely lacking, though most of those interested in such works would prefer adequate notes. The book is attractively produced and will be ornamental as well as useful in any library.

FLORENCE D. COHALAN.

The Axe of Wandsbek. Arnold Zweig. Viking. $3.50.

"THE AXE OF WANDSBEK" is the story of the conquest of Hamburg by National Socialism in 1938. By inevitable extension, it is a study of the intellectual and moral suicide of German society. The novelist, however, presents his theme almost entirely on the level of action. His characters—begging, conniving or battling—are very real human beings, interesting for themselves, quite apart from their importance as symbols.

An apparently trivial act gets the story under way. Albert Teetjen, master-butcher and member of the SS, writes in desperation to his old comrade-in-arms, Hans Footh. Would Herr Footh, he begged, be good enough to use his great influence with the City Council to keep chain stores out of residential districts and thus save independent shops (and especially Teetjen's shop) from bankruptcy?

Herr Footh, opportunist extraordinary, had other ideas. The Governor of Fuhlsbuettal Prison, father of his mistress, Annette, was in trouble because he had long delayed the execution of four Communists. Now, powerful forces in Berlin demanded their heads as a kind of prelude to Hitler's visit to Hamburg. Unfortunately, the official executioner was ill. What could be more amusing than to present the Governor with a master-butcher as a substitute headsman! Teetjen would get a little money, Annette would be impressed by Footh's thoughtfulness, the Governor would become a bit more cordial—and Berlin would be pleased.

Thus, with a simple device, Zweig begins to draw into his plot people from every stratum of society in the great city. Industrialists, tavern keepers and military men, educators, whores and washerwomen are tossed forcibly against each other until, like cats in a bag, they are joined in fierce, bitter action.

The fourfold beheading is presented in a curiously effective way, as seen through a pair of binoculars used alternately by Annette and her father's friend, Dr. Kaete Neumeier, as they stand at an attic window in the Governor's house. Thereafter, the story traces the effect of the execution on the principal characters. For Albert Teetjen, who swings his axe stolidly and effectively, the act was his ruin, although even at the end he does not understand why. Governor Koldeway thought it quite unfortunate, for he knew the men were innocent. It was almost an hour later before he could face his regular second breakfast, but then he was able to pick up his favorite author, Nietzsche, and withdraw himself from the event as though it had never happened. He loved justice but, as he explained to one of his daughters, realities of thought were purely intellectual and not to be applied to the crude world of everyday. Herr Footh was delighted. Lieutenant-Colonel Lintze, although he also knew the men were innocent, thought it should have been taken care of long ago. The Communists must go first, then the Army could take steps to control Hitler who was getting a bit out of hand. Only Kaete Neumeier brooded and began her hunt for the masked headsman.

Already in an emotional turmoil, Dr. Kaete was further upset by a book she had been reading concerning the peculiar form of madness of a certain Dr. Schreber. It was remarkable, she thought, how closely the mad doctor resembled Hitler. Herr Koldeway read the book and agreed. Amazing! Thus, sardonically, Zweig presents the German intellectual teetering on the edge of the cliff and learning of his situation from a book. In subsequent scenes, in which he ingeniously combines symbolism and realism, the author develops what might be called "the plot of the upper classes" against Hitler.

Zweig is much more interesting when he is writing about the military, intellectual and professional groups than when he concerns himself with the masses. He is, however, interested in showing the effect of National Socialism on the common man. He does this through Teetjen and proceeds with exasperating Teutonic superthoroughness to explore in innumerable episodes his losing fight for respectability and existence. One of the most brutal scenes in the book is that in which Teetjen's SS comrades shake him down for their share of the blood money; another is the musical memory-concert for a minister murdered in a concentration camp. It is for Teetjen, the "fall guy," that Zweig reserves his small store of compassion. But Teetjen is so thoroughly (if unwittingly) ugly, so dangerous, so stupid that one's chief desire is to see the last of him, and Zweig's pity is not communicated to the reader.

Although many of them are pleasant in a superficial sort of way, all of the major characters are basically ugly. They have a behavior pattern we do not understand. They laugh or chuckle when normal people would be overcome with horror. They eat heartily when most people would vomit. A thoroughly understandable dislike for his subjects seems to color Zweig's treatment of them, an attitude quite different from that shown in his great tetralogy of World War I, particularly "The Case of Sergeant Grischa."

"The Axe" is a massive work by a great craftsman, a complex and powerful piece of imaginative reconstruction. But it is a depressing book, almost unrelieved by pity, hope, wit or variety. All of the characters are victims, yet all of them except the four Communists are

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marked by Zweig as thoroughly deserving the symbolic axe he dangles over them at the end.

JAMES E. CRONIN.

Countryman's Companion. David B. Greenberg. Harper's. $3.00.

THIS is the loveliest book I've seen this year. Beautiful to look upon, it's also full of beautiful writing. It's an anthology—rather, it's a harvest of thirty-nine essays and poems in praise of farming as an art, a philosophy, and a way of life. It sings the deathless unity of all men who have ever lived in partnership with the sun, the rain and the soil. It begins with the story of Hesiod the Boeotian, who wrote his farmers' almanac—"in hexameters that rivaled Homer's"—twenty-eight centuries ago. It closes with a piece by Homer Croy. And from first to last it sticks to the eternal ploughman's point of view.

Farming, said Xenophon, is "the most fitting employment for men of honorable birth." By his own admission, set forth in an Editor's Note, Mr. Greenberg believes it "the most rewarding occupation in the world." Indeed, Mr. Greenberg offers the book as his "personal testament" on the subject. Coming from a city-born, city-bred graduate of Columbia University, that would seem a little strange, perhaps—unless you knew that Hesiod, too, was city-born and city-educated. Mr. Greenberg quite obviously followed his own deep instinct back to the soil. Hesiod followed his father, who had lost a fortune in the shipping business during one of those periodic business depression that afflicted Asia Minor in the eighth century, B. C.

Among the authors here represented you'll be glad to meet Fan Cheng-ta who, in China 800 years ago, sang the song of the four seasons. His poem is presented here —apparently for the first time—in English verses by Gerald Bullett. And if he is not already a favorite of yours, you'll be delighted to meet that grand old American farmer, Hector St. John Crevecoeur, who shared with his great friend Jefferson the dream of a free America composed of free and independent farmers, and who realized his own ideal on a farm in Orange County, New York; who carried on a rather wide correspondence with friends in Europe and America, and who ploughed his fields with his little son riding in a chair that screwed onto the plough-beam.

Worth reading, too, is the Introduction by Donald Culross Peattie. And very well worth looking at are the black-and-white "decorations" by Jack Wilson.

DAVID MARSHALL.

Green Memories. Lewis Mumford. Harcourt. $3.50.

FROM the spirit and mind of a father writing of his dead son comes a biography which will move the hearts and minds of parents everywhere. The parents of the dead, especially when death came in the flowering of youth, will have "green memories" revived, gain faith that it was worth it, share consolations in mutual grief. The parents of the living will find love for their children quickened, concern deepened, resolution strengthened; they will approve, sometimes disagree, inevitably learn as they follow, through the reflections of an honest philosophic father, the year by year development of his son.

Geddes Mumford was killed in action on Mount Altuzzo in Italy, shortly after his nineteenth birthday. The

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story of his life in its bare facts is not unusual. Though extraordinarily promising and mature beyond his years, he was in most ways a typical American boy—restless with the individualism which is the marrow of our family life, ambitious, energetic, tempestuous, enamoured with hobbies and science, recklessly devoted to hunting and outdoor life. The environment in which he grew was enriched by his gifted parents and by the opportunity of living in an idyllic hamlet in Dutchess County. But it is not events which make "Green Memories" a lasting book. It is the insight into the delicate intimate relationship of a family, the wisdom as well as the mistakes of the parents, the virtue as well as the failings of the son.

Geddes was the victim of parental theories (no first child escapes them and he was an only child for ten years) though happily the Mumfords came to realize the deficiencies of the behavioristic and pragmatic patterns. "We did not get rid of the dragon; we only banished St. George," comments Mr. Mumford on their efforts to eliminate fantasy from Geddes's childhood. They learned that "intelligence must never over-reach love; and love means not only visible and demonstrable tenderness, in the teeth of the once-fashionable Freudian warnings, but it also means a sympathetic participation in the child's purposes . . . That pride, which is self absorption, is the enemy of love". Though unattached to any formal creed, they read the Bible to Geddes and "he never lost a fundamental interest in religion itself . . . based on a sense of the cosmos." The limits of such creedless Faith are best expressed by Geddes himself in one of his last letters from the battlefront: "Speaking of God, I've lost most of my old cynicism on the subject. I still refuse to believe in it, but now I look upon it as a questionable not a closed subject. I envy the man who *can* believe in God."

Difficult to rear and experiencing difficulty in disciplining himself, he emerges, in spite of his father's reluctance to make claims, a virtuous young man and, in the words of his first sergeant, "absolutely fearless." There are other heroes, and other parents who mourn. It is unlikely that there is another father who could write with the understanding of Lewis Mumford, creating the tenseness of classic tragedy as he tells the story of Geddes.

EMERSON HYNES.

Now in Mexico. Hudson Strode. Harcourt. $5.00.

THIS book, by the author's own statement, "is a selective recountal of various trips to different parts of the country made at intervals during the last eleven years." A sort of travelogue-diary, it presents highly personal and conversational glimpses, in various lengths and details, of Yucatan, December in Cuernavaca, Taxco, and Acapulco, a turn about Mexico City and its environs, a motor trip through the state of Michoacan, something about Puebla, a short stay in Oaxaca, a jaunt to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and an excursion to San Miguel Allende and Querétaro. Thirty-two fine full-page photographs contribute to make this a most handsome volume. The absence of a detailed index, however, seems to make it clear that the book is to be read for enjoyment rather than for positive information or reference.

A genial observer who enjoys the poetry of life and finds that the days pass pleasantly, the author is not too deeply concerned in his savoring of Mexico with the philosophies of life which come to torment most visitors in that country. His chapters on personal visits with the artists Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco are revealing, with a sophisticated restraint; but he seldom rises to give his own honest opinion, if he has one. Once, however, he makes a positive asseveration, repeated elsewhere in undertones, that former President Cárdenas is "by all odds the greatest living Mexican."

The work of a non-Catholic, the book is, in general, considerate and understanding of the Church, as in its appreciation of the work of Bishop Quiroga in Michoacan. The author shrewdly observes that Cárdenas showed feet of clay in erecting a statue to Father Morelos with the clenched fist of a Communist, and he concedes, relative to the devotion of the Indians to the Blessed Virgin, that "if the flaming candles, the images of the saints, words murmured in the confessional box, the harmless drops of holy water served as anodynes in their hard mortal life, then they should have their portion of spiritual food, in whatever form was most palatable to them." Even for this, we can forgive him for lapsing into quotations, from the British Minister to Mexico, Henry George Ward, about Mass stipends in the 1820's, if not for his own idea that, before Juarez tackled the Church, "the ignorant and simple" prostrated "themselves to lip the paving stones where episcopal feet had trod."

For the tourist who has been in Mexico and for the armchair traveler who simply dreams of it, this book offers a charming guide and commentary and even manages painlessly to inject some history. But for a penetrating view of the country, its inner faith and life, one must not expect too much.

JAMES A. MAGNER.

The Living Novel. V. S. Pritchett. Reynal. $2.75.

"WE WERE and are living through a revolution, and revolutions stir us to a total reconsideration of the past." Thus V. S. Pritchett, the English writer best known here for his subtly perverse short stories, prefaces his collection of studies of the novel, many of which first appeared in the *New Statesman and Nation*. During the War he consoled himself for not being able to write what he wanted by reading what he wanted, and he turned to the great novelists of the past. He approached them "not as a literary critic, but as an expectant novelist," for whom conventional literary criticism had little to say and who sought, like the common reader, chiefly to be interested and stimulated. The result of this empirical approach is literary criticism of a high order, which knocks the dust off many a standard novelist and illuminates many a dark corner of literary history.

Mr. Pritchett deplores the error of believing that the classics were "written for critics, for literary historians, for students or for leisured persons of academic tastes." He reminds us that the "masters, great and small, remembered or neglected, were the freshest, the most original, the most importunate and living novelists of their time; that they stood above their contemporaries and survived them, because they were more readable, more entertaining, more suggestive and incomparably more able than the common run of novelists." He brushes aside the barriers of changed styles, methods, and beliefs with the observation that "the great are the great, not only because of their inherent qualities, but because they were the writers who were most sensitive to the situation of

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their time," who were rooted in life rather than in literary convention. And in tracing out the development of the form, he comments that new material for the novel is provided "only by new seeing, not by new sights."

With these guiding principles Mr. Pritchett discusses most of the English novelists from Fielding and Smollett to Conrad and D. H. Lawrence, and some of the great nineteenth century French and Russians. He makes no claim to have produced a history of the novel, for this is the record of a personal "journey of rediscovery." Some famous figures he dealt with in an earlier volume, *In My Good Books;* and "others, like Jane Austen, Tolstoy, Trollope, Henry James and Proust, have moved me, but not to the labor of writing." He has considered some minor writers because they were forgotten and seemed to him worth reviving. But this modest and unpretentious volume offers more insights and more stimulation than many formal works of literary criticism, and it provides strong support for Mr. Pritchett's dictum that the interests of the working novelist and of the common reader are closely akin. This is a wise, witty, and exciting book, which should start many readers on journeys of rediscovery of their own.

MASON WADE.

Saint Catherine of Siena

D. H. MOSELEY

IT IS APPROPRIATE that the sixth centenary of the birth of one of the greatest letter writers in all history should be commemorated by postage stamps bearing, along with her portrait, quotations from her letters. The writer is Saint Catherine Benincasa, born in Siena, March 25, 1347. The stamps, to be issued by Italy, are an 8-lire stamp which is inscribed in Italian, "I go calling 'peace, peace, peace!'"; a 10-lire, on which Catherine is shown in her Dominican habit against a background of Italian churches; and a 25-lire, on which she is represented dictating to a scribe with a boat in the background: the quotation on this is, *Dopo la tempesta il Signore darà il sereno*: God will give quiet after the storm.

The word *pace* runs as a motif through Catherine's letters. Take, for example, that letter written at Florence in the summer of 1378, when news arrived that Pope Urban VI had removed the interdict which his predecessor Pope Gregory XI had placed on the Florentines. Catherine, who had been instrumental in persuading Gregory XI to return to Rome from Avignon, had also persuaded the Florentines to obey his interdict which they were disregarding, and she wrote in exultation, "Dearest Sons, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind eye sees, and the dumb speak, calling outloud with great gladness, 'Peace, peace, peace!' . . . Saturday, the first olive branch came at one o'clock at night, and, today, at Vespers, came the other. . . . I send you some of the olive of peace. Remain in the holy and sweet grace of God." This was addressed to members of her *famiglia,* persons of all ranks of society who, attracted by her zeal, convinced by her good sense, and sustained by her love, labored as her chaplains, secretaries and almoners.

This *famiglia* was drawn to Catherine by a magnetism remarkable even among saints, a magnetism which she evidenced from babyhood. Born in 1347, the year of the first visitation of the Black Death, in the Fontebranda section of the Tuscan city of Siena (then more populous and far more important a city than London), Catherine was one of the youngest children of Giacomo and Lapa Benincasa. Giacomo was a wool dyer, and his shop was part of his house, with workmen and tradesmen coming and going, so Catherine, from her earliest years, was surrounded by many persons. Ten older brothers and sisters, apprentices, neighbors, made much of her and nicknamed her "Eufrosina" because of her joyousness; they admired her appearance, her golden-brown hair, gray eyes, olive skin, and the small, exquisitely modeled head and face characteristic of the Sienese. Giacomo, her father, was as much under her spell as anyone, and announced that what he had was hers to give to the poor, since she was determined to feed them; even sharp-tongued Lapa, her mother, who, had she had to choose between Catherine's effecting the Pope's return from Avignon or marrying a rich man, would doubtless have elected the opulent son-in-law, usually yielded to her; indeed, it was Lapa who persuaded the *Mantellate,* Sienese widows who belonged to the Third Order of Saint Dominic, to admit Catherine to their group at the age of fifteen. Catherine continued to live at home, but the garb of a sister, a black cloak or *mantellata* over a white habit, protected her in her mission of peace much as a soldier's apparel did Joan of Arc in war less than a century later.

Not that Catherine knew her mission in the beginning as Joan did hers. Her call seemed to be to a life of prayer: daily Mass at the Dominican church near her home, fervent thanksgivings after Holy Communion, for her primary devotion was to the Holy Eucharist, and hours of contemplation in her own small room. It was only after three years of such a life that she began to go out to nurse the sick of the city, especially the plague stricken, and, it was while ministering to the sick that her vocation of peacemaker became evident; she could soothe and quiet the feverish; moreover, she could straighten out the tangles in which her fellow-citizens were involved. There was sort of a radiant tranquillity about her, and, when she spoke, her utterance was as direct as light itself. By her twenty-fourth year, she was known as a peacemaker in Siena, by her twenty-fifth, throughout Tuscany. Two years later, she was appealed to both by the Pope and his declared enemy Bernabo Visconti, the tyrant of Milan.

To the modern mind the turbulence of the fourteenth century is confusing because there was little question of nations or allied nations battling each other. Even the Hundred Years War was not fought between a united England and a united France. Italy was in no sense united, and the wars there were between cities and leagues of cities; sometimes they fought each other, sometimes they contended with the armies of the Pope. Guelphs and Ghibelines clashed throughout the land. Sir John Hawkwood, the English mercenary, leader of the famous White Company, fought for the Pope or for Bernabo Visconti, for one city or its enemy, until he finally decided that from Florence came his best supply of gold florins. The popes, one after another, lived in Avignon, and their legates, often French, did all they could to keep them there. For Catherine, war was very real. The nobles of Siena and their followers fought incessantly, and the clang of arms and shouts of soldiers were common sounds in the narrow streets through which she walked; in the lovely countryside, with its olive groves and vineyards

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and blue mountains, there was turmoil, too, for brigands attacked the convoys sent out by the rich bankers and merchants of Siena. Catherine was familiar with the sight of blood, and with the more painful sight of faces marked by hatred and ill will. And she, who lived in God's presence, thought of all of these contenders as God's children and loved them as His friends: she desired peace for them because she desired their sanctification. And she had a marvelous faith in the potentiality for good in any human being: that was largely responsible for her strength and her magnetism.

Her mission as peacemaker among the nobles of Siena is delightfully described by most of her modern biographers, by Edmund Gardner, Augusta Drane, Vida Scudder, Alice Curtayne, Jorgensen, Antony and others, and the stories are well known; that, for instance, of her sending old Francesco Saraceni to make peace with his enemy the Prior, and of the unenthusiastic greeting that he and his favorite falcon received. And the famous one of the time when Catherine had engaged the nobles of the Maconi, Tolomei and Rinaldini families to assemble at San Cristoforo to make peace. The young nobles had determined to evade the appointment, but, one by one, secretly, they entered the dark old church, and saw slim, white-clad Catherine kneeling before the altar. Naturally, they came to terms.

Neighboring towns invited Catherine, Pisa, for instance. The Pope asked her to go to Lucca. Florence called on her almost as freely as it did on Sir John Hawkwood, although for other offices. Bernabo Visconti requested her to secure the good will of Siena for him.

It is unlikely that Bernabo knew Catherine's technique; certainly her approach and his differed radically. The individual who sought peace with his fellow-man and asked Catherine's aid thereto, must first make his peace with God. "Go to confession first, then we will talk about your affairs," she would say to members of the warring families. The Pope, probably at the suggestion of the Dominicans, appointed three chaplains to assist her.

Her intimate knowledge of human problems and her sound good sense enabled her to judge character; she knew that Pope Gregory XI vacillated, that Pope Urban VI was too harsh, that Visconti wanted power, primarily, and Hawkwood, gold; and she was sure that, after their fashion, all of these, with the exception of Hawkwood, and all of the Italian cities, would welcome peace.

It is this call to peace that rings out in her letters. It was, of course, more remarkable that she should have been asked to speak personally to the leaders of Pisa and Lucca, to meet with the Signoria and Eight of War of Florence than it was that she should have journeyed to Avignon to plead with Pope Gregory XI for the Florentines, or been called by Pope Urban VI to address the cardinals in Rome: and all of these personal appearances were more extraordinary for a woman of her day than her letter writing. Nevertheless, her letters were remarkable, also. There are approximately four hundred of these extant, and, even if we did not have Fra Raimondo's *"Legenda"* or the Process of Canonization, or any of the numerous minor lives, we would know through the letters what was the dearest wish of Catherine, *"La Beata Popolana,"* and how she sought to attain it by appealing to leaders and groups, to popes and their legates, to the Eight of War, to Queen Giovanna of Naples, King Charles V of France, and Sir John Hawkwood, the free lance. Reading, we feel that, if she were living today, she would approach in just such a manner not only the United Nations, but also John L. Lewis and Stalin, the powers that be in Jersey City, and in Kansas City, for that matter, Tito, and Franco, and the new Comintern.

Catherine was no dreamer, and it is significant that one of her early letters went to Sir John Hawkwood and his followers, because it was the mercenaries who made war worthwhile and prolonged it. Her letter is forthright and utterly charming in its urging them to be true sons and knights of Christ that they may be spiritually prepared to give their lives for Him on a Crusade. Palestine, then as now, was a sore spot, and Catherine, with her contemporaries, thought that if Europeans could find a common objective in wresting the Holy Places from the Egyptians, they would not be continuously at war with each other. In noting that a woman saint, and one of the most brilliant women of her times, could advocate such a solution, we realize that our theories at least are better than those of our forebears. But Catherine's desire for a Crusade sprang from her longing for peace.

She was no less practical with Gregory XI than with Hawkwood. It was very well for him to send her to Lucca. She went. But she did not hesitate to write him at Avignon where he tarried, "Until now I have been myself at Pisa and Lucca, doing my best to prevent them from joining the League of those guilty ones who have rebelled against you. But they are in great perplexity, having received no advice or help from you, though they are ceaselessly worked upon and threatened by your enemies. . . . I beseech you to write urgently to Messer Piero [Gambacorti of Pisa]. Speak to him affectionately, and do not delay. I say no more."

Her letter to the Priors of Florence might have been penned for some who, in our larger society, attempt to bring about world peace: "You desire to reform your city: but I tell you, your wish to do so will never be fulfilled unless you cast to the ground the hatred and bitterness of your hearts, and your love of yourselves."

And, to any ruler or diplomat or labor leader of our day, Catherine, with her faith in the essential worth of the individual, might have written as she did to Buonaccorso di Lapo, "Comfort you in Christ our sweet Jesus, for I hope by His goodness that, if you will keep in the way you should, you will have a good peace. Remain in the holy and sweet grace of God. Sweet Jesus. Jesus Love."

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